

May 3, 1855.

CHARLES WHEATSTONE, Esq., V.P., in the Chair.

In accordance with the Statutes, the Secretary read the following list of Candidates recommended by the Council for election into the Society.

Arthur Connell, Esq.
William Farr, Esq.
William Lewis Ferdinand Fischer, Esq.
Isaac Fletcher, Esq.
William John Hamilton, Esq.
John Hawkshaw, Esq.
John Hippisley, Esq.
James Luke, Esq.

A. Follett Osler, Esq.
Thomas Thomson, M.D.
Charles B. Vignoles, Esq.
Charles Vincent Walker, Esq.
Robert Wight, M.D.
Alexander William Williamson, Esq.
George Fergusson Wilson, Esq.

The reading of Dr. PAVY's paper, entitled "An Experimental Inquiry into the nature of the metamorphosis of Saccharine Matter, as a normal process of the animal economy," was resumed and concluded.

The author begins by observing, that the saccharine matter met with in the animal economy is derived from two sources—from the vegetable kingdom, and from the liver of the animal itself; in each case being poured into the general circulation through the hepatic veins. The liver not only enjoys the power of forming sugar, but it likewise exerts (as shown by the experiments of Bernard) some modifying influence over that which is traversing its capillaries and which has been absorbed from the food, by which it is transformed from *vegetable* into *animal* sugar, and thus rendered more apt for serving in the processes of animal life.

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The sugar poured into the general circulation through the hepatic veins is conveyed to the capillaries of the lungs, where it in great part disappears, but never entirely so, according to very numerous analyses which the author has made on this subject. If the blood be traced onwards from the arteries through the systemic capillaries into the veins, the small amount of sugar which impregnates arterial blood will be found to be still undergoing a process of destruction; and what appears exceedingly interesting, this process of destruction is not carried on with equal activity in the different parts of the system at large. In the capillaries of the chylo-poietic viscera, the destruction is so complete, that the blood in the portal vein may be entirely free from saccharine principle, when the blood returning from other parts, as that contained in the femoral or jugular veins, remains slightly impregnated. This curious fact has a bearing that will be presently adverted to, with reference to the views to be advanced concerning the nature of the metamorphosis of sugar in the animal economy.

The *principal* seat of destruction of saccharine matter in the animal system being located in the respiratory organs, seems at first sight to support the theory of Liebig—that sugar is one of those substances which undergoes a process of combustion, by its direct combination with oxygen and its resolution into water and carbonic acid. Some experiments on the temporary obstruction of the respiration and the examination of arterial blood before and after the operation, led the author to call in question this view, as he observed that notwithstanding the supply of oxygen was cut off to such an extent as almost to occasion death, yet a considerable destruction of sugar took place in the lungs. This, coupled with the fact that a disappearance of sugar takes place in the systemic capillaries, and unequally so in different portions of them, induced him to push his investigations, and see if there might not be some other cause in operation in the living animal to effect the normal destruction of sugar, besides the direct chemical action of the oxygen absorbed in respiration. The results of these investigations, which were first directed towards the changes produced in blood normally containing sugar, injected through the capillaries of lungs removed from the animal, and artificially inflated with atmospheric air or oxygen gas, have induced the author to refer the metamorphosis of sugar in the

animal economy, to a process which is perfectly consistent and analogous with the well-known chemical bearings of this substance apart from the animal system.

In experiments which the author has now several times repeated, he injected blood removed from the right side of the heart of an animal—and therefore normally containing sugar—through the capillaries of the artificially inflated lungs of another; and found that as long as the blood retains its fibrine, there is as much destruction of its sugar as would take place in the living animal; but that where the fibrine has been separated from the serum and corpuscles, the sugar ceases to be influenced by the presence of oxygen, or ceases to disappear during this process of artificial respiration. It would hence appear, that something besides mere contact with oxygen is requisite for the destruction of sugar. But in other experiments, he has found that oxygen is nevertheless a necessary agent concerned in the process of transformation observed during the arterialization of the blood that has not undergone spontaneous coagulation. It would therefore seem, in fact, that oxygen acts secondarily on the sugar through the medium of the fibrinous constituent of the blood:—that it exerts some changes upon this azotized principle, which are capable of inducing the metamorphosis of sugar.

If we look to the ordinary chemical bearings of saccharine matter apart from the animal system, we find that an azotized substance undergoing the molecular changes of decomposition, placed in contact with sugar readily excites a process of fermentation, and converts it by a mere alteration of the grouping of its elements into another substance, one atom of sugar ($C_{12}H_{12}O_{12}$) being resolved into two atoms of lactic acid ($C_6H_6O_6$). We also find that sugar is not susceptible of oxidation except under the influence of strong chemical reagents. Chemical analogy, therefore, would lead us to look upon the secondary action of oxygen as the more probable process of physiological destruction; especially when we take into consideration, that nowhere do we meet with such a constant series of molecular changes taking place as amongst the azotized constituents of a living animal. In the above-mentioned experiment of injecting fibrinated and defibrinated blood through an artificially inflated lung, when the blood is capable of undergoing the molecular changes

of assimilation on contact with oxygen as in the living animal, the sugar in great part disappears, but so soon as the fibrine is separated by spontaneous coagulation, and the blood has thus lost its vital characteristics, oxygen is no longer capable of exerting any metamorphosing influence on its saccharine ingredients.

If the molecular changes occurring during the decomposition of an azotized substance be capable of converting sugar into lactic acid, why should not the molecular changes occurring during the building-up or elaboration of this same nitrogenized compound effect the same? Indeed, we have seen that the process of destruction is carried on to a certain extent in the systemic capillaries, and more especially in those of the chylo-poietic viscera, where the molecular changes of nutrition are also correspondingly carried on with greater activity than elsewhere. So that analogy and experiment would tend to show that the physiological destruction of sugar is owing to a process similar to fermentation induced by the molecular changes occurring in the nitrogenized constituents of the animal during life. And, in accordance with this, we find lactic acid present in the system, and largely separated from arterial blood by the muscular tissue, and the secerning follicles of the stomach.

As regards the lactic acid fermentation, it is well known that the presence of an alkali favours, whilst that of an acid retards the process. In two experiments on animals, the author injected carbonate of soda and phosphoric acid into the circulating current, and observed in the case of the latter that sugar immediately accumulated in the blood.

The preceding observations refer more especially to the changes that take place in the saccharine ingredient of the blood during life; and the author next proceeds to notice some interesting phenomena observable during the decomposition, and even the spontaneous coagulation of blood containing sugar.

If the blood of an animal normally impregnated with sugar be placed aside, and allowed to undergo spontaneous coagulation, on examining separately the serum and clot on the following day, it will be found, that although the serum may be largely saturated with sugar, the clot is entirely, or almost entirely destitute of it. Now, as the clot is moist and remains to a certain extent infiltrated with the serum from which it has partially separated, it would

appear that even the molecular changes arising from the spontaneous coagulation of the blood are sufficient to effect the destruction of normal animal sugar. And this conclusion is strengthened by the fact, that in diabetic blood (the sugar of which, as would appear from other considerations also, is not so susceptible of metamorphosis as the healthy variety) the sugar does not disappear to a similar extent in the clot.

Under the changes of the decomposition of blood, normal animal glucose is very readily metamorphosed. The rapidity of the metamorphosis depends on the activity of the decomposition of the animal substances present, and when the destruction of the sugar is complete the blood has assumed an *acid reaction*.

This acid reaction of decomposing blood is only observable in that which was previously pretty largely impregnated with sugar. It appears to be owing to the formation of lactic acid. Certainly, it cannot be due to carbonic acid, for the reaction remains after exposure to a boiling temperature.

The disappearance of sugar in the manner just pointed out does not depend on the oxygen of the air, except in so far as this agent is concerned in exciting the decomposition of the azotized constituents of the blood; for the sugar disappears as rapidly when there is a small, as when there is a large amount of surface exposed to the air. But if the air be carefully and completely excluded, no signs of decomposition of the animal parts of the blood are to be observed, and under these circumstances the sugar also remains. The disappearance of sugar is more rapid where the fibrine and corpuscles are present, than when the serum is exposed alone; and in accordance with this, the blood in the one case undergoes decomposition much sooner than in the other—a fact easily intelligible from the greater amount of azotized ingredients present.

If blood normally impregnated with saccharine matter be placed aside until signs of incipient decomposition are observed, and the sugar is beginning to disappear, exposure to a current of oxygen rapidly completes the total disappearance of the saccharine constituent. In this observation we have a further illustration of the analogy that appears to exist, in the nature of the metamorphosis of sugar as a physiological process, and that which takes place chemically under the influence of an azotized compound, whose elemen-

tary particles are in a state of molecular transition. During life, the higher organic constituents of the blood are capable of undergoing the changes of assimilation on exposure to contact with oxygen, and there is a considerable destruction of sugar effected; for a short period after death these azotized constituents remain stationary and uninfluenced by oxygen, and with this, there is a corresponding suspension of the transformation of sugar; but finally, the animal matter of the blood on contact with oxygen, especially during a warm temperature, assumes a state of decomposition, the molecular changes of which again excite the destruction or metamorphosis of saccharine matter.

The sugar *disappears far less rapidly* from diabetic blood under the influence of exposure to the atmosphere, than from healthy right-ventricular blood. From these, and a few other observations which he has as yet been able to make on the blood in Diabetes Mellitus, the author, were he to hazard an opinion on the nature of that obscure disease, would be disposed to say that there appears to be a modification of sugar produced by the liver, which is not susceptible of undergoing the normal process of destruction in the animal system, and which, therefore, accumulating in the blood, is eliminated by the kidneys. The experiments of Bernard have shown that vegetable glucose (grape-sugar) is not susceptible of destruction in the processes of animal life, unless converted into animal glucose by the agency of the liver. Diabetic sugar would therefore seem to bear a resemblance in its physiological relations to vegetable, rather than to animal glucose.

The following communications were in part read:—

- I. “Researches on the Partition of Numbers.” By ARTHUR CAYLEY, Esq., F.R.S. Received April 14, 1855.

The author discusses the following problem:—“To find in how many ways a number q can be made up of the elements $a, b, c \dots$, each element being repeatable an indefinite number of times.” The solution depends upon a peculiar decomposition of an algebraical